MULTIPLE SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM CONFORMANCE STATEMENT
For the Hanson El Monte Pond Flood Control, Restoration and Recharge Project
PDS2014-LDGRMJ-00012
APNs: 392-150-01-00, 392-150-10-00, 392-150-11-00, 392-150-12-00, 392-150-14-00, 392-150-15-00, and 392-150-16-00

July 20, 2015

I. Introduction

Project Description

The Hanson El Monte Pond Flood Control, Restoration, and Recharge (HEMP) project is a grant funded project managed by Lakeside's River Park Conservancy (LRPC) to provide flood management, habitat restoration and groundwater recharge in Lakeside, California. The project site is located on 10402 El Monte Road, in the Lakeside Community Plan area within unincorporated San Diego County. The HEMP project site spans approximately 83 acres of a 143-acre property owned by the Endangered Habitats Conservancy (EHC). A 43-acre man-made pond, created as a result of a previous sand mining operation, exists onsite. In the existing condition, the pond's water source is seasonally fluctuating groundwater, as it is physically and hydrologically separated from the San Diego River by the 100-year flood protection erosion barrier along the northern boundary.

The main goals of the project include floodwater management; wetlands habitat creation, enhancement, and restoration; and groundwater recharge. With respect to floodwater management, an inlet culvert would be installed through the existing erosion berm to reduce downstream flood risk, connecting the Hanson Pond to the San Diego River to allow a 10-year or greater storm event to enter the pond in a controlled fashion. Allowing flood waters into the project area and expanding the pond's overall water holding capacity will incrementally moderate downstream flood flow and help improve local groundwater recharge.

The restoration component of the project includes approximately 5.07 acres of riparian enhancement, 2.65 acres of riparian establishment, 0.49 acre of riparian restoration, 3.14 acres of freshwater marsh establishment, 15.49 acres of open water to freshwater marsh conversion, and 0.31 acre of freshwater marsh restoration. Freshwater marsh will be converted from open water through filling and raising the pond bottom elevations within the southern portions of the pond. Freshwater marsh will be established by grading down the lower terrace south of the pond. Wetland enhancement activities include removing invasive species and replacing them with native container plants and seeds. In addition, revegetation would include approximately 2.38 acres of Diegan coastal sage scrub/broom baccharis enhancement, 14.26 acres of Diegan coastal sage scrub establishment, and 0.07 acre of coastal sage scrub restoration. The proposed project results in approximately 27.15 acres of wetlands establishment/enhancement/

restoration and 16.71 acres of coastal sage scrub establishment/enhancement/ restoration.

In addition to revegetation efforts, two non-motorized multi-use open space trails are proposed. The first trail runs north to south and is located between El Monte Road to the south and the San Diego River area to the north. The second trail runs east to west, parallel with the San Diego River and includes two alternatives. The first alternative (Alternative A) is located within the project boundary, along the top of the erosion berm on an existing dirt road/path. The second alternative (Alternative B) is located immediately north of the site on Helix Water District's property and is also located on an existing dirt road/path. Alternative A will be implemented if the trail is unable to be placed on the HWD property. If the HWD property is made available for the trail in time for construction Alternative B shall be implemented. Both trails are non-motorized open space trails constructed of compacted native dirt or decomposed granite (DG) with trail markers and trail signage.

Additional future projects are proposed to be constructed at a later date as funding becomes available. These projects include an approximately 2.0 acre parking and equestrian staging area to facilitate access to the trails, a native demonstration garden with interpretive signs to inform the public about specific endemic species, up to two nature to provide interpretive information on the importance of the El Monte Valley to the San Diego River System, and restoration of the southern portion of the site between El Monte Road and the HEMP project that is currently non-native grasslands/ruderal habitat to native coastal sage scrub.

The project is proposed to be implemented in four main phases. The first phase is anticipated to last approximately 30 days and includes project surveying, utility mark out, installation of work limit fencing, and organization of construction staging. The second phase is anticipated to last approximately 105 days and includes clearing and grubbing of site vegetation, demolition and removal of old abandoned quarry foundations, site grading, and installation of an arched culvert inlet. The third phase is the final construction phase, anticipated to require 80 days, and includes habitat establishment, restoration, and enhancement activities. The fourth and final phase includes all post-construction maintenance and biological monitoring, anticipated to last approximately 600 working days. Habitat monitoring will be performed by Lakeside's River Park Conservancy quarterly for the first three years and biannually during the fourth and fifth year following the completion of construction.

Existing Conditions

The HEMP project site is north of El Monte Road, south of the San Diego River, approximately 5 miles west/downstream of El Capitan Reservoir, and immediately east of San Diego County Water Authority's and Helix Water District's pipeline easement and access road. Land use in the general vicinity includes rural residential areas and small agricultural operations, limited due to the close proximity to the San Diego River and El Capitan Reservoir and the subsequent floodplain and dam inundation zone. The

San Diego River serves as an important wildlife corridor within the project vicinity, and also represents a portion of the Lakeside archipelago, a stepping-stone corridor of upland habitat supporting sensitive species such as California gnatcatcher and cactus wren. The privately-owned property is within the El Monte Sand Pit Reclamation Plan area, and includes a 43-acre man-made pond, created as a result of a previous sand mining operation. The project site is located within unincorporated land in the Metro-Lakeside-Jamul Segment of the County of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Subarea Plan. Conservation goals for this segment, and for which the HEMP project needs to conform, involve conservation of specific habitat types and rare or special-status flora and fauna. The majority of the project study area is within a pre-approved mitigation area (PAMA), and it is also considered a biological resource core area (BRCA).

The project is within the foothills of the Peninsular Range in a transitional area between the coast and the mountains. The four soil types found within the project site and vicinity include Tujunga sand (represented on a majority of the site), Huerhuero loam, Las Posas, and Cieneba-Fallbrook soils. Twelve native vegetation communities were mapped within the project study area for the Biological Resources Report prepared for the project (Dudek 2015). These include baccharis sage scrub, Diegan coastal sage scrub, eucalyptus woodland, mulefat scrub, southern cottonwood willow riparian forest, southern willow scrub, and coastal and valley freshwater marsh. Three non-native vegetation communities, tamarisk scrub, non-native grassland, and non-native grassland-broadleaf dominated, occur within the study area. Three land cover types (non-vegetated area) occur within the study area: open water, disturbed land, and urban/developed. A total of 57 vascular plant species, consisting of 30 native plant species (53 percent) and 27 non-native species (47 percent) were recorded during initial project surveys. The study area supports habitat for common upland and riparian animal species. Scrub, chaparral, and riparian habitats, including open water, within the project study area provide foraging and nesting habitat for migratory and resident birds and other wildlife species. Open water within the study area provides foraging opportunities for wildlife such as fish, amphibians, mammals, and birds. A list of wildlife species observed within and adjacent to the project study area during the general wildlife reconnaissance survey, vegetation mapping, and rare plant surveys is provided in Appendix B to the Biological Resources Report (Dudek 2015).

Two special-status plant species, smooth tarplant (*Centromadia pungens* ssp. *Laevis*) and San Diego County viguiera (*Bahiopsis laciniata*) were detected within the study area. Potential habitat for several special-status wildlife species, including least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), yellow warbler (*Setophaga petechia* [=*Dendroica petechia brewsteri*]), and other species occurs within the project study area. Special-status species observed or anticipated in the project area include the turkey vulture, osprey, nesting raptors, nesting coastal California gnatcatcher, and least Bell's vireo.

The project site supports approximately 65 acres of wetland waters of the U.S./State under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), Regional Water

Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). This includes the 41.9 acre El Monte pond, 3.1 acres of wetland waters under the jurisdiction of the ACOE, RWQCB, and CDFW, 12.5 acres of non-wetland waters under the jurisdiction of the ACOE, RWQCB, and CDFW, and 7.4 acres of wetlands under the jurisdiction or the CDFW only. In addition, the site contains approximately 1,093 linear feet of ephemeral drainages under the jurisdiction of ACOE, RWQCB, and CDFW.

Project Impacts and Mitigation

As outlined within the report titled, "Biological Resources Report Hansen El Monte Flood Control, Restoration, and Recharge Project" prepared by Dudek in April 2014, there would be potentially significant direct and indirect impacts to sensitive vegetation communities, special-status species, and jurisdictional wetlands and waters associated with the proposed project. The HEMP project would result in permanent direct impacts to a total of 0.30 acre of vegetation communities and land cover types as a result of the installation of an arched culvert inlet through the existing erosion barrier (shown in Table 1, below). Temporary direct impacts totaling approximately 22.94 acres will be restored to native habitats through restoration, enhancement, and establishment activities. An additional 0.90 to 0.98 acre of permanent impacts (not including existing disturbed/developed areas) will result from creation of trails, depending on the alternative selected. Activities associated with construction, including clearing, trampling and grading have the potential to significantly impact special status upland species, wetland/riparian species, and nesting bird species. However, due to the nature of the project as a habitat restoration project and protection of existing habitat areas, construction activities outside the designated construction zones are not anticipated to occur. Potential adverse impacts to riparian habit or other sensitive natural communities identified by CDFW or USFWS associated with the proposed project would be restored to pre-construction conditions.

Only one federally and state listed endangered species, least Bell's vireo, is found within the project area, and would be subject to indirect impacts associated with habitat removal. Grading, wetlands establishment, enhancement and installation of an arched culvert inlet would result in temporary impacts or disturbance to least Bell's vireo habitat. The proposed east west trail alternatives A and B are located on existing dirt roads and as such are not likely to incur direct or indirect impacts to special-status species. The proposed north-south trail may result in indirect impacts to special-status species, especially if additional future upland habitat restoration projects are implemented on-site adjacent to the trail. No direct impacts to nests or individual birds are expected to occur, as vegetation removal would occur outside of the breeding season.

Table 1. Impacts to Habitat and Required Mitigation

Habitat Type	MSCP Tier	Permanent Impacts (Acres)	Temporary Impacts (Acres)	Estimated Future Project Impacts (Acres)	Project Restoration
Upland Vegetation Communities					
Broom Baccharis Scrub (BBS)	II	0.02	0.04	0.09	**HEMP Project:** CSS Establishment– 14.26 ac CSS Enhancement – 2.38 ac CSS Restoration – 0.07 ac **Future Projects:** Upland Scrub Restoration – approx.16 ac
Coastal Sage Scrub (CSS)	II	-	-	-	
Disturbed Broom Baccharis Scrub (dBBS)	II	-	0.18	1.47	
Disturbed Coastal Sage Scrub (dCSS)	II	0.01	0.02	-	
Annual/Non-Native Grassland (AGL)	III	0.04	0.07	3.09	
Non-Native Grassland–	III	-	-	13.64	
Broadleaf Dominated (NNGB)					
Eucalyptus Woodland (EUC)	IV	-	-	0.43	
	Subtotal[1]	*0.07*	*0.31*	*18.71*	
Wetland Vegetation Communities					
Disturbed Mulefat Scrub (dMFS)	I	-	-	-	**HEMP Project:** FWM Establishment – 3.14 ac OW to FWM Conversion – 15.49 ac FWM restoration – 0.31 ac Riparian Enhancement -5.07 ac Riparian Establishment – 2.65 ac Riparian Restoration – 0.49 ac
Disturbed Southern Cottonwood Willow Riparian Forest (dSCWRF)	I	0.06	0.01	-	
Disturbed Southern Willow Scrub (dSWS)	I	-	0.28	-	
Coastal and Valley Freshwater Marsh (FWM)	I	0.02	0.31	-	
Mulefat Scrub (MFS)	I	-	0.08	-	
Southern Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest (SCWRF)	I	-	0.38	-	
Southern Willow Scrub (SWS)	I	-	-	-	
Tamarisk Scrub (TS)	I	-	0.13	--	
	Subtotal[1]	*0.08*	*1.19*	--	
Land Cover Types					
Urban/Developed (DEV)	IV	0.01	0.14	--	
Disturbed Habitat (DH)	IV	0.14	5.83	--	
Open Water/Pond (OW)	N/A	-	15.47	-	
	Subtotal[1]	*0.15*	*21.44*	--	
	Total[1]	**0.30**	**22.94**	**18.71**	

As shown in Table 1, the project will provide a substantial net gain of jurisdictional resources including 3.14 acres of freshwater marsh establishment, 15.49 acres of open water to freshwater marsh conversion, 2.65 acres of riparian establishment, 5.07 acres of riparian enhancement, 14.26 acres of coastal scrub establishment, and 2.38 acres of coastal scrub enhancement. All temporary impacts to vegetated habitat areas will be restored to pre-construction conditions. In addition, trampling, clearing, and grading associated with construction would not occur outside of designated construction zones.

Due to the gains of jurisdiction resources, addition of suitable habitat for sensitive species, and restoration of impacted areas to pre-construction conditions, impacts would be less than significant.

Through implementation of the mitigation measures BIO-1, identified in the 15183 Checklist prepared for the project and detailed further within the Biological Technical Report referenced above, any potential impacts to nesting special-status species would be avoided due to clearing and grading during the non-breeding season (September 15 to March 15).

The findings contained within this document are based on County records, staff field site visits and the Biological Resources Report prepared by Dudek dated June 2015. The information contained within these Findings is correct to the best of staff's knowledge at the time the findings were completed. Any subsequent environmental review completed due to changes in the proposed project or changes in circumstance shall need to have new findings completed based on the environmental conditions at that time.

The project has been found to conform to the County's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Subarea Plan, the Biological Mitigation Ordinance (BMO) and the Implementation Agreement between the County of San Diego, the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Third Party Beneficiary Status and the associated take authorization for incidental impacts to sensitive species (pursuant to the County's Section 10 Permit under the Endangered Species Act) shall be conveyed only after the project has been approved by the County, these MSCP Findings are adopted by the hearing body and all MSCP-related conditions placed on the project have been satisfied.

II. Biological Resource Core Area Determination

The impact area and the mitigation site shall be evaluated to determine if either or both sites qualify as a Biological Resource Core Area (BRCA) pursuant to the BMO, Section 86.506(a)(1).

A. Report the factual determination as to whether the proposed Impact Area qualifies as a BRCA. The Impact Area shall refer only to that area within which project-related disturbance is proposed, including any on and/or off-site impacts.

The majority of the site is located in a pre-approved mitigation area (PAMA), within an area of habitat that contains biological resources that support or contribute to the long-term survival of sensitive species; therefore, the site qualifies as a BRCA.

B. Report the factual determination as to whether the Mitigation Site qualifies as a BRCA.

As a BRCA, the open space resulting from this project is considered part of the regional MSCP preserve system. As such, all of the requirements relating to the "Preserve" outlined in the County's Subarea Plan, the Implementation Agreement, and the Final MSCP Plan apply to this open space.

III. Biological Mitigation Ordinance Findings

A. Project Design Criteria (Section 86.505(a))

The following findings in support of Project Design Criteria, including Attachments G and H (if applicable), must be completed for all projects that propose impacts to Critical Populations of Sensitive Plant Species (Attachment C), Significant Populations of Narrow Endemic Animal Species (Attachment D), Narrow Endemic Plant Species (Attachment E) or Sensitive Plants (San Diego County Rare Plant List) or proposes impacts within a Biological Resource Core Area.

1. Project development shall be sited in areas to minimize impact to habitat.

For the the floodwater management component of the project, the proposed inlet culvert would be installed through an existing erosion barrier. Approximately 43.86 acres of the 83.2-acre project site are proposed for enhancement, establishment, and restoration of riparian, freshwater marsh, open water, and coastal sage scrub habitats. Future projects (e.g., upland habitat restoration, native demonstration garden, kiosk, Americans with Disabilities Act access, and boardwalk) would be sited within vegetation communities with low habitat values, such as disturbed habitat, developed land, or non-native grassland. Proposed trails would be located within existing dirt trails/access roads, where possible, to minimize impacts to native habitat. Given the amount of land to be protected and the avoidance of the more sensitive vegetation types, the project has minimized impacts to habitat.

2. Clustering to the maximum extent permitted by County regulations shall be considered where necessary as a means of achieving avoidance.

Clustering is not applicable since the project involves floodwater management and wetland and upland habitat enhancement and creation.

3. Notwithstanding the requirements of the slope encroachment regulations contained within the Resource Protection Ordinance, effective October 10, 1991, projects shall be allowed to utilize design that may encroach into steep slopes to avoid impacts to habitat.

The site does not support steep slopes as defined by the RPO; no steep slope encroachment is needed.

4. The County shall consider reduction in road standards to the maximum extent consistent with public safety considerations.

No reduction in road standards was required in order to minimize habitat impacts.

5. **Projects shall be required to comply with applicable design criteria in the County MSCP Subarea Plan, attached hereto as Attachment G (Preserve Design Criteria) and Attachment H (Design Criteria for Linkages and Corridors).**

   Findings in accordance with Attachments G and H are provided below.

B. Preserve Design Criteria (Attachment G)

In order to ensure the overall goals for the conservation of critical core and linkage areas are met, the findings contained within Attachment G shall be required for all projects located within Pre-Approved Mitigation Areas or areas designated as Preserved as identified on the Subarea Plan Map.

1. **Acknowledge the "no net loss" of wetlands standard that individual projects must meet to satisfy State and Federal wetland goals, policies, and standards, and implement applicable County ordinances with regard to wetland mitigation.**

   No net loss of wetlands would occur as part of this project. All onsite wetlands are included within the proposed onsite biological open space areas and, therefore, would not be impacted.

2. **Include measures to maximize the habitat structural diversity of conserved habitat areas, including conservation of unique habitats and habitat features.**

   The project proposes enhancement, establishment, and restoration of riparian, freshwater marsh, open water, and coastal sage scrub habitats. On-site open space will include a variety of wetland and upland communities. The project will maximize habitat structural diversity by preserving sensitive habitats, sensitive plant and wildlife species, and jurisdictional waters.

3. **Provide for the conservation of spatially representative examples of extensive patches of Coastal sage scrub and other habitat types that were ranked as having high and very high biological value by the MSCP habitat evaluation model.**

   The project will preserve the majority of the coastal sage scrub within the HEMP site. Of the approximately 24.1 acres of existing coastal sage scrub (including disturbed) within the biological resources study area, approximately 0.53 acre of permanent impacts and approximately 0.02 acre of temporary impacts to disturbed coastal sage scrub are anticipated, including potential impacts from future projects and proposed trail alignments.

4. **Create significant blocks of habitat to reduce edge effects and maximize the ratio of surface area to the perimeter of conserved habitats. Subsequently, using criteria set out in Chapter 6, Section 6.2.3 of the MSCP Plan, potential impacts from new development on biological resources within the preserve that should be considered in the design of any project include access, non-native predators, non-native species, illumination, drain water (point source), urban runoff (non-point source) and noise.**

   The on-site open space will connect to undeveloped land surrounding the project site. No edge effects are anticipated. The project will comply with the San Diego County Watershed Protection, Storm Water Management, and Discharge Control Ordinance (WPO) and the approved Stormwater management Plan, which will prevent adverse impacts from runoff to the open space.

5. **Provide incentives for development in the least sensitive habitat areas.**

   The project will conserve the most sensitive habitat areas on site, including sensitive wetland and upland vegetation communities, as well as habitat for sensitive plants and wildlife. Future projects (e.g., upland habitat restoration, native demonstration garden, kiosk, Americans with Disabilities Act access, and boardwalk) would be sited within vegetation communities with low habitat values, such as disturbed habitat, developed land, or non-native grassland. Proposed trails would be located within existing dirt trails/access roads, where possible, to minimize impacts to native habitat.

6. **Minimize impacts to narrow endemic species and avoid impacts to core populations of narrow endemic species.**

   One narrow endemic species, least Bell's vireo, has been observed within the project area. No other species identified as narrow endemic were detected or determined to have potential to occur within the project area. Occupied habitat for least Bell's vireo would be subject to both temporary and permanent impacts totaling less than one acre. No direct impacts to nests or individual birds are expected to occur, as vegetation removal would occur outside of the breeding season. Although grading and installation of structures would result in limited impacts to least Bell's vireo, the project would provide a substantial net benefit to the species through the establishment and enhancement of native riparian habitat expected to be used by least Bell's vireo. The establishment of 2.65 acres of riparian habitat, riparian restoration of 0.49 acre, and an additional 5.07 acres of riparian enhancement would result in net impacts that are less than significant.

7. **Preserve the biological integrity of linkages between BRCAs.**

   The HEMP project is located within the boundaries of a BRCA. Project construction will be overseen by a habitat restoration specialist and the project

will improve habitat connectivity. Therefore, no impacts to linkages between BRCAs are expected.

8. **Achieve the conservation goals for covered species and habitats (refer to Table 3-5 of the MSCP Plan).**

   All conservation goals for covered species and habitats identified in Table 3-5 of the MSCP Plan have been met. Each habitat type has been adequately protected and/or mitigated, and covered species observed and/or with the potential to occur onsite will be adequately protected through the preservation, restoration, and/or enhancement native habitats.

C. Design Criteria for Linkages and Corridors (Attachment H)

For project sites located within a regional linkage and/or that support one or more potential local corridors, the following findings shall be required to protect the biological value of these resources:

1. **Habitat linkages as defined by the BMO, rather than just corridors, will be maintained.**

   The project maintains and enhances existing habitat linkages as defined in the BMO through the creation, enhancement, and restoration of habitat onsite.

2. **Existing movement corridors within linkages will be identified and maintained.**

   The project study area is part of a regional wildlife corridor that includes the San Diego River and Lakeside archipelago corridor of upland habitat. The project maintains and enhances existing movement corridors through the creation, enhancement, and restoration of habitat onsite.

3. **Corridors with good vegetative and/or topographic cover will be protected.**

   The project includes substantial net gain in special status vegetation communities, including 3.14 acres of freshwater marsh establishment, 15.49 acres of open water to freshwater marsh conversion, 2.65 acres of riparian establishment, 5.07 acres of riparian enhancement, 14.26 acres of upland scrub establishment, and 2.38 acres of upland scrub enhancement. The preservation of these habitats in open space would maintain and enhance the existing movement corridors with good vegetative/topographic cover.

4. **Regional linkages that accommodate travel for a wide range of wildlife species, especially those linkages that support resident populations of wildlife, will be selected.**

   The preservation of open space on this property will contribute to the existing regional linkages within the project vicinity, including the San Diego River and

Lakeside archipelago corridor of upland habitat. The project maintains and enhances existing regional linkages through the creation, enhancement, and restoration of habitat onsite, and allows the continued movement of a wide range of resident wildlife populations.

5. **The width of a linkage will be based on the biological information for the target species, the quality of the habitat within and adjacent to the corridor, topography, and adjacent land uses. Where there is limited topographic relief, the corridor must be well vegetated and adequately buffered from adjacent development.**

   The project study area is part of a regional wildlife corridor that includes the San Diego River and Lakeside archipelago corridor of upland habitat. The proposed project would widen the corridor available for wildlife movement and would provide enhanced habitat.

6. **If a corridor is relatively long, it must be wide enough for animals to hide in during the day. Generally, wide linkages are better than narrow ones. If narrow corridors are unavoidable, they should be relatively short. If the minimum width of a corridor is 400 feet, it should be no longer than 500 feet. A width of greater than 1,000 feet is recommended for large mammals and birds. Corridors for bobcats, deer, and other large animals should reach rim-to-rim along drainages, especially if the topography is steep.**

   Existing movement corridors and linkage widths will be maintained and enhanced as part of the proposed project.

7. **Visual continuity (i.e., long lines-of-site) will be provided within movement corridors. This makes it more likely that animals will keep moving through it. Developments along the rim of a canyon used as a corridor should be set back from the canyon rim and screened to minimize their visual impact.**

   Existing movement corridors and existing visual continuity will be maintained and enhanced as part of the proposed project.

8. **Corridors with low levels of human disturbance, especially at night, will be selected. This includes maintaining low noise levels and limiting artificial lighting.**

   The project involves flood management, wetland habitat restoration and creation, and groundwater recharge and the site will remain unoccupied, as in the existing condition. The project does not propose any outdoor lighting or noise producing equipment that would disturb sensitive wildlife. Several potential options for recreational trails are proposed, which would slightly increase human activity and noise levels in the area due to passive recreation

and associated proposed approximately two acre parking lot and equestrian staging area for trail users. The introduction of the proposed recreational uses are not anticipated to result in substantial effects to wildlife movement, as trails would be fenced and signage would be provided to limit human disturbance and prevent inadvertent trespass into native habitat areas.

9. **Barriers, such as roads, will be minimized. Roads that cross corridors should have ten foot high fencing that channels wildlife to underpasses located away from interchanges. The length-to-width ratio for wildlife underpasses is less than 2, although this restriction can be relaxed for underpasses with a height of greater than 30 feet.**

   Access to the project would be provided by existing dirt access roads from the north, west, and east sides connecting to El Monte Road; no new roads or underpasses are proposed. Fencing to channel wildlife is not necessary, since the roads are existing and the increase in occasional vehicle trips to the site due to the several proposed options for recreational trails on site would be minimal.

10. **Where possible at wildlife crossings, road bridges for vehicular traffic rather than tunnels for wildlife use will be employed. Box culverts will only be used when they can achieve the wildlife crossing/movement goals for a specific location. Crossings will be designed as follows: sound insulation materials will be provided; the substrate will be left in a natural condition, and vegetated with native vegetation if possible; a line-of-site to the other end will be provided; and if necessary, low-level illumination will be installed in the tunnel.**

    Access to the project would be provided by existing dirt access roads from the north, west, and east sides connecting to El Monte Road; no new roads or underpasses are proposed. Road bridges or other wildlife crossings are not necessary, since the roads are existing and the increase in occasional vehicle trips to the site due to the several proposed options for recreational trails on site would be minimal.

11. **If continuous corridors do not exist, archipelago (or stepping-stone) corridors may be used for short distances. For example, the gnatcatcher may use disjunct patches of sage scrub for dispersal if the distance involved is less than 1-2 miles.**

    The project study area is part of a regional wildlife corridor that includes the San Diego River and Lakeside archipelago corridor of upland habitat. The proposed project would maintain the existing continuous corridor for wildlife movement.

IV. Subarea Plan Findings

Conformance with the objectives of the County Subarea Plan is demonstrated by the following findings:

1. **The project will not conflict with the no-net-loss-of-wetlands standard in satisfying State and Federal wetland goals and policies.**

   The project site supports approximately 65 acres of wetland and other waters. The project will provide a substantial net gain of jurisdictional resources including 3.14 acres of freshwater marsh establishment, 15.49 acres of open water to freshwater marsh conversion, 2.65 acres of riparian establishment, 5.07 acres of riparian enhancement, 14.26 acres of coastal scrub establishment, and 2.38 acres of coastal scrub enhancement. All temporary impacts to vegetated habitat areas will be restored to pre-construction conditions. Therefore, the project meets the "no net loss" of wetlands standard.

2. **The project includes measures to maximize the habitat structural diversity of conserved habitat areas including conservation of unique habitats and habitat features.**

   The project proposes enhancement, establishment, and restoration of riparian, freshwater marsh, open water, and coastal sage scrub habitats. On-site open space will include a variety of wetland and upland communities. The project will maximize habitat structural diversity by preserving sensitive habitats, sensitive plant and wildlife species, and jurisdictional waters.

3. **The project provides for conservation of spatially representative examples of extensive patches of Coastal sage scrub and other habitat types that were ranked as having high and very high biological values by the MSCP habitat evaluation model.**

   The project will preserve the majority of the coastal sage scrub within the HEMP site. Of the approximately 24.1 acres of existing coastal sage scrub (including disturbed) within the biological resources study area, approximately 0.5**3** acre of permanent impacts and approximately 0.02 acre of temporary impacts to disturbed coastal sage scrub are anticipated, including potential impacts from future projects and proposed trail alignments.

4. **The project provides for the creation of significant blocks of habitat to reduce edge effects and maximize the ratio of surface area to the perimeter of conserved habitats.**

   The on-site open space will connect to undeveloped land surrounding the project site. No edge effects are anticipated. The project will comply with the San Diego County Watershed Protection, Storm Water Management, and Discharge Control Ordinance (WPO) and the approved Stormwater management Plan, which will prevent adverse impacts from runoff to the open space.

5. **The project provides for the development of the least sensitive habitat areas.**

The project will conserve the most sensitive habitat areas on site, including sensitive wetland and upland vegetation communities, as well as habitat for sensitive plants and wildlife. Future projects (e.g., upland habitat restoration, native demonstration garden, kiosk, Americans with Disabilities Act access, and boardwalk) would be sited within vegetation communities with low habitat values, such as disturbed habitat, developed land, or non-native grassland. Proposed trails would be located within existing dirt trails/access roads, where possible, to minimize impacts to native habitat.

6. **The project provides for the conservation of key regional populations of covered species, and representations of sensitive habitats and their geographic sub-associations in biologically functioning units.**

   All conservation goals for covered species and habitats have been met. Each habitat type has been adequately protected and/or mitigated. The following covered species were detected flying over the site: Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*), Red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), and Turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*). These covered species will be adequately protected through the preservation of their respective habitats. The project proposes enhancement, establishment, and restoration of riparian, freshwater marsh, open water, and coastal sage scrub habitats.

7. **Conserves large interconnecting blocks of habitat that contribute to the preservation of wide-ranging species such as Mule deer, Golden eagle, and predators as appropriate. Special emphasis will be placed on conserving adequate foraging habitat near Golden eagle nest sites.**

   The project study area is part of a regional wildlife corridor that includes the San Diego River and Lakeside archipelago corridor of upland habitat. The project site is not located near Golden eagle nest sites; however, it does preserve habitat for small mammals, raptors, and local predators through the creation, enhancement, and restoration of habitat onsite.

8. **All projects within the San Diego County Subarea Plan shall conserve identified critical populations and narrow endemics to the levels specified in the Subarea Plan. These levels are generally no impact to the critical populations and no more than 20 percent loss of narrow endemics and specified rare and endangered plants.**

   One narrow endemic species, least Bell's vireo, has been observed within the project area. No other species identified as narrow endemic were detected or determined to have potential to occur within the project area. Occupied habitat for least Bell's vireo would be subject to both temporary and permanent impacts totaling less than one acre. No direct impacts to nests or individual birds are expected to occur, as vegetation removal would occur outside of the breeding season. Although grading and installation of structures would result in limited impacts to least Bell's vireo, the project would provide a substantial net benefit to

the species through the establishment and enhancement of native riparian habitat expected to be used by least Bell's vireo. The establishment of 2.65 acres of riparian habitat, riparian restoration of 0.49 acre, and an additional 5.07 acres of riparian enhancement would result in net impacts that are less than significant.

9. No project shall be approved which will jeopardize the possible or probable assembly of a preserve system within the Subarea Plan.

The project study area is part of a regional wildlife corridor that includes the San Diego River and Lakeside archipelago corridor of upland habitat. The project will contribute to the regional preserve system as designed in the Subarea Plan. Therefore, the project will not jeopardize the possible or probable assembly of a preserve system within the Subarea Plan.

10. All projects that propose to count on-site preservation toward their mitigation responsibility must include provisions to reduce edge effects.

Based on the nature of the project being for floodwater management; wetlands habitat creation, enhancement, and restoration; and groundwater recharge, there will not be a permanent introduction of edge effects which can often occur from residential or commercial projects. BMPs are incorporated into the restoration plan, which will minimize any potential for edge effects to occur.

11. Every effort has been made to avoid impacts to BRCAs, to sensitive resources, and to specific sensitive species as defined in the BMO.

Approximately 43.86 acres of the 83.2-acre project site are proposed for enhancement, establishment, and restoration of riparian, freshwater marsh, open water, and coastal sage scrub habitats. Future projects (e.g., upland habitat restoration, native demonstration garden, kiosk, Americans with Disabilities Act access, and boardwalk) would be sited within vegetation communities with low habitat values, such as disturbed habitat, developed land, or non-native grassland. Proposed trails would be located within existing dirt trails/access roads, where possible, to minimize impacts to native habitat. Given the amount of land to be protected and the avoidance of the more sensitive vegetation types, the project has minimized impacts to habitat and impacts to a BRCA.

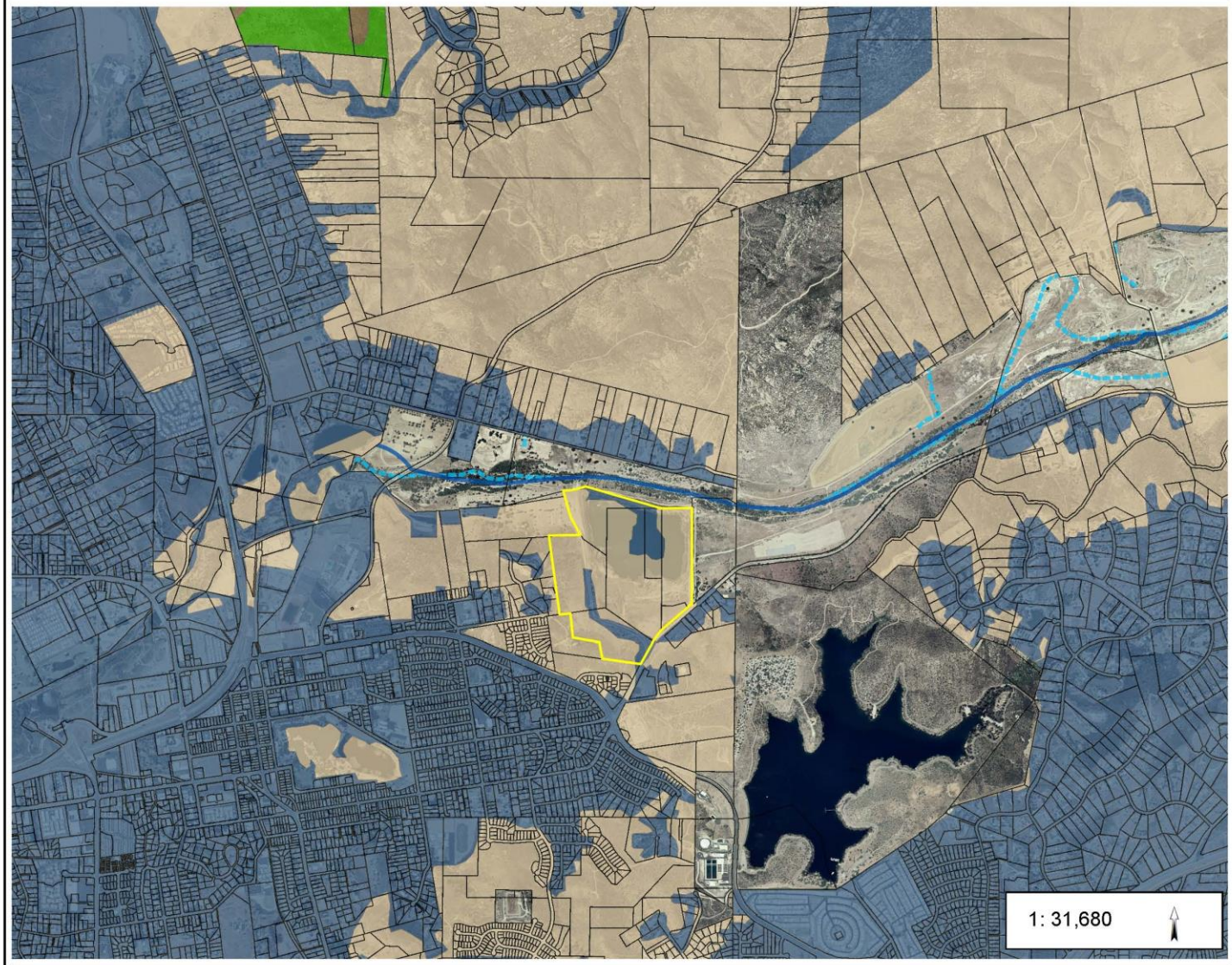
The project proposes enhancement, establishment, and restoration of riparian, freshwater marsh, open water, and coastal sage scrub habitats. On-site open space will include a variety of wetland and upland communities. The project will provide a net benefit to the BRCA, sensitive resources, and sensitive species by preserving sensitive habitats, sensitive plant and wildlife species, and jurisdictional waters.

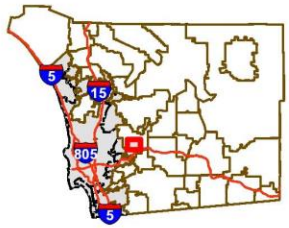
Ashley Gungle, Planning & Development Services

July 20, 2015

MSCP Designation For the Hanson El Monte Pond Flood Control, Restoration and Recharge Project

LUEG GIS
Land Use & Environment Group
Geographic Information Services





Legend

- Parcels
- Multiple Species Conservation County)
  - State and Federal Pre-Approved Mi
  - Hardline Preserve
  - Take Authorized Area
  - Conserved Subject to Agreement w
  - Otay Ranch Areas Where no Take
  - Major Amendment Area
  - Minor Amendment Area
  - Minor Amendment Area Subject to
  - Santa Fe Valley Sensitive Biologica Areas
  - Golf Course Related Development Open Space II Areas
  - Unincorporated Land in Metro-Lake
- Rivers
- Creeks and Streams

Notes

Project Study Area denoted in yellow

1.0 0 0.50 1.0 Miles

NAD_1983_StatePlane_California_VI_FIPS_0406_Feet
Planning and Development Services